

Summation of the NASSS International  
Graduate Student Seminar  
Literature and Culture Workshop  
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(SECTION MENTORS)

Seven graduate students, four Americans and three Japanese, participated in the literature and culture workshop of this year's International Graduate Student Seminar. The morning session of the workshop was moderated by Professor NAGASAWA Tadashi, and the afternoon session by Professor NAGAHATA Akitoshi. Each of the presentations was followed by comments from Professor Anita Patterson and Professor Aparna Bhattacharyya, followed by a discussion.

The first presenter in the morning session was Ms. Destiny BIRDSONG (Vanderbilt University). She presented a paper entitled "Life on a Crystal Stair: Depictions of Traumatic Knowledge Transmission between Mothers and Daughters in Black Women's Literature." Ms. Birdsong, using four texts written by Caribbean- and African-American female authors--Paule Marshall, Edwidge Danticat, Natasha Trethewey, and Emily Raboteau--discussed black women writers' depiction of knowledge transmission between mothers and daughters. Seeing "instances of trauma" in the harsh social and economic conditions under which the black mothers have to raise their daughters, she argued that in these traumatic instances the mothers not only try to pass on the knowledge of "survival strategies," but also impart valuable knowledge about racism, ethno-cultural identity, trans-nationalism and the personal link to a historic past.

Ms. ICHIKAWA Nobuko (Kyoto University) then presented her paper, "Conflict and Adaptation in a Native American Community in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*." In this presentation, which discussed the atomic bomb references in the novel, Ms. Ichikawa pointed out Robert Oppenheimer's remarks as Silko's possible inspiration, and argued that the bomb is symbolic of the destructive nature of the Western civilization. She also argued that the protagonist's restored relationship to the real sun indicates his future orientation in the world.

The next presenter was Ms. L. Lelaine BONINE (University of Minnesota), whose presentation was entitled "Master of (Global) Suspense: Digital Hitchcock and Cinephilia Gone Global." In this presentation, Ms. Bonine, after introducing a brief history of cinephilia and fandom, explained how the digital communities of spectators continue to engage with and promote Hitchcock's films. Then, with

various examples, she showed how these digital communities caused the proliferation of global Hitchcock studies, the connection of Hollywood production practices with those of other national cinemas, and the creation of a discursive network in which the cinema links geographically isolated communities of spectators across the globe.

Mr. OKAJIMA Kei (State University of New York at Buffalo) next presented his paper, entitled “Abiku Child as Palimpsest: Image of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and African Sentiment in Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road*.” In this presentation, Mr. Okajima discussed Okri’s novel in connection with the topic of “forgetfulness” in African literature. Paying attention to the “abiku” children, or children who keep dying and being reborn, in the novel, he showed the ways in which spirituality operates in the imagination of black diasporic experiences. Mr. Okajima also discussed the anti-postcolonialist strain, the palimpsestic notion of time, and the African sentiment on slavery in the novel.

After a lunch break, the session resumed in the afternoon with a presentation by Mr. Gerry CANAVAN (Duke University). In his presentation, entitled “Petroleum Futures: Oil, Abundance, Addiction, and the Ontology of Limits,” Mr. Canavan discussed literary and cultural representations of oil capitalism, taking oil as a “cognitive map” for the world-system of global capitalism as a whole. Quoting from texts such as Upton Sinclair’s *Oil!*, Ryszard Kapuscinski’s *Shah of Shahs*, George W. Bush’s “State of the Union” address, and films *Local Hero* and *Avatar*, he traced the ideology of oil in U.S. culture from its origin as a dream of liberatory abundance to nightmarish fantasies of exhaustion and economic collapse.

Next, Mr. TAKEUCHI Masaya (Kent State University) presented his paper, “Faulkner’s Redefinition of Quentin’s Suicide: Southern Guilt and Self-Punishment in *Absalom, Absalom!*” Based on a close reading of *Absalom, Absalom!*, Mr. Takeuchi discussed why Faulkner used Quentin Compson as a narrator again in this novel, after having used him as a narrator in his earlier novel, *The Sound and the Fury*. He argued that Faulkner felt compelled to write about the South critically while feeling the pressure from the society that repressed criticism, concluding that Quentin’s suicide represents the author’s self-punishment for betraying his native region.

The literature and culture workshop was concluded by a presentation by Ms. Emily Donaldson FIELD (Boston University). In her presentation entitled, “The Transnational Doubleness of W. E. B. Du Bois, Henry Adams, and Mary Antin,” Ms. Field discussed three texts--Du Bois’s *The Soul of Black Folk*, Adams’s *The Education of Henry Adams*, and Antin’s *The Promised Land*. She first pointed out how Du Bois’s notion of African American “double-consciousness” acknowledged the international basis of American identity and sought to expose the “two-ness” of the nation itself. Then she showed how Adams and Antin adapted Du Bois’s concept of double-consciousness in ways that sought to contain their own internationalism and undo Du Bois’s admission of the African and European

origins of American identity.

The workshop was carried out in warmth and the sense of camaraderie. Each of the presentations received valuable comments and suggestions from Professor Patterson and Professor Bhattacharyya, as well as from other participants. We moderators express our gratitude to all the participants for their contribution to this successful workshop. We also hope that the participation in this workshop will help each student to make a further progress in his or her research.